

The Bethlehem Star

VOLUME 31 ISSUE 12

DECEMBER 2017

Stargazing

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." Matthew 2:1-2

If the stars should appear one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and adore; and preserve for many generations the remembrance of the city of God which had been shown! But every night come out these envoys of beauty, and light the universe with their admonishing smile.

Ralph Waldo Emerson (Nature and Selected Essays, 1836)

When was the last time you saw the city of God in the night sky? We all take the stars for granted, many nights we don't even notice them. All of my life has been lived in the shadow of light pollution, so I rarely see the night sky in its full grandeur. Do you remember when you were a child and could see the Milky Way? I was 18 years before I saw the Milky Way. I was camping in the mountains far away from city lights. That night was breathtaking. There were so many stars in the sky that they almost touched. I read about the Milky Way in school but had no idea that you could see it in the night sky. It felt like the one night in a thousand that Emerson describes above.

Was the star of Bethlehem visible to all humankind but only seen by the Wise Man? Did shepherds sit under the star without looking up? Did fathers walk to the barn to check on their animals and not realize the good news proclaimed in the sky? Did King Herod himself walk out on his veranda under the glaring light of the star of Bethlehem and completely miss it? Were the Wise Men the only people "wise" enough to know what it meant?

Is God proclaiming His good news into our world today and we are missing it? Is a message from Jesus hidden in the weary smile of a nursing home resident? Is there something we need to hear that only our estranged brother can teach us? Is God offering us food for our soul at our local soup kitchen? Where is God trying to speak to us today and where are missing it because of the busyness of our lives?

This Christmas season is a good time to look around for the light of God surrounding all of us. To slow down and donate your time toward a good mission. To send a card to long lost friend or visit a lonely neighbor. It is the time to cast aside our petty arguments and reconnect with each other. It is time to see Christ in our midst.



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UMW Update ...

Greetings! It's such a busy season for the United Methodist Women and we had a productive month.

- We made Thanksgiving baskets for our Sunshine list and some others. Visits were made, baskets delivered, and both were enjoyed by all!
- Shopping was done for OCC shoeboxes and gifts for our adoptee.
- Carol Alexander won the quilt that we auctioned in October. Congrats, Carol!
- The Family Christmas dinner will take place on Tues., Dec. 12th at 6:00 in the CLC. Everyone is invited to attend! A love offering will be taken at the meal.
- The UMW will serve the Lions Club Christmas dinner on Dec. 14th as a fundraiser.
- All of our donations have been completed for the end of the year and officers have been elected.

We want to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Remember to keep Christ in Christmas!

Your Sister in Christ,
Barbara

Education Report ...

Hope you will come to the 5th Sunday Joint Sunday School class on December 31st. This will be for ALL Sunday School classes. We will meet in Poston Hall to have brunch and devotions! Here's the scoop:

Primary - decorations for food table

Elementary - donuts

Youth - fruit

Young Adult - make coffee & hot chocolate
have a flavored creamer or two

Seekers - 4 egg casseroles

Friendship & Mixed - sweet rolls

Men's Bible - juice

We will plan for 50-60 people, so everyone does not have to bring something. Plan it out in your class. Bring your food to Poston Hall, take attendance in class and come to brunch at 10:00.

Let's enjoy a time of fellowship
to ring out 2017 and pray in 2018!



November was a time of giving thanks together...

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

Thank you all for your part in the Community Thanksgiving Service. What a wonderful time of worship and fellowship we enjoyed with our community as we gave thanks to God together. I just wanted to let you know that we received 65 cans of food and \$375 for the Iredell Christian Ministries Food Pantry at this service.

May you be filled to overflowing with God's love and "thanks living".

With a grateful heart, Naomi King

Pastor, Bethel-Marvin

Psalm 34:8



*I will honor Christmas in my heart
and try to keep it all the year.*

The Christmas Carol



Christmas Happenings

A Christmas Prayer

*Lord, before this fleeting season is upon us,
Let me remember to walk slowly.
Lord, bless my heart with love and with quiet.
Give my heart a leaning to hear carols.
Grace our family with contentment,
And the peace that comes only from You.
Lord, help us to do less this busy season;
Go less; stay closer to home; kneel more
May our hearts be Your heart.
May we simply, peacefully, celebrate You.*

This Christmas and all throughout the year,
Lord, "May our hearts be Your heart."

Sermon Series "The Redemption of Scrooge"

**Christmas
Cantata on
Sunday,
December 17
at 11:00 a.m.**



Have You Voted Yet?



Family Christmas Movie Night is on
Saturday, December 16th at 7:00 p.m.
in the CLC. We will watch one of the
following movies:

- 1) The Polar Express
- 2) Home Alone
- 3) A Christmas Carol
(classic 1951 B/W version)
- 4) A Christmas Story
- 5) Grinch/Charlie Brown/Frosty triple
feature. All of these are the classic
cartoon versions.

Vote for your favorite in the narthex,
send a message to Josh or Randy
Hager, or go on the Bethlehem Face-
book page to place your vote.

Please vote and spread the word!
Voting ends on December 10th.

Christmas Eve
CANDLELIGHT
Service

**December 24th
8:00 p.m.**

Christmas Play Reminders...

- Rehearsals for the Children's Christmas play will follow worship on Dec. 3rd & Dec. 10. Lunch will be provided. All children and youth who are participating are encouraged to try to be at these rehearsals.
- All children in the Christmas play should wear black shirts and blue jeans ... including Wise Men!
- The "Manger Boys" need to have a leather jacket.
- Children who are playing shepherds should wear/bring a tropical/Hawaiian shirt, shorts and flip flops.
- If you have any questions or concerns please contact Jackie Douglass at 704-871-9125.

Memorials ...

In Memory of **Morris & Hilda Roseman**

By Pam King

In Memory of **Hubert Lindsey**

By Ross & Myrtle Freeze
Allen & Mary Bost

In Memory of **Pauline Benfield**

By Ross & Myrtle Freeze

In Memory of **Herman Starrette**

By Ross & Myrtle Freeze

In Memory of **Phyllis Grant**

By Ross & Myrtle Freeze

In Memory of **William Harris**
(Daisy Warren's brother)

By Friendship Bible Class
Tot & Laine Sherrill

Thank You ...

We met Jackie at Alexander Correctional Institution in Taylorsville at a Disciple Bible Study he attended for 9 months, years ago. Bethlehem sent him a food box for Christmas amounting to about \$35. You have touched his heart. Moody Press is sending him a daily devotional entitled "Today in the Word". Hence his words of thank you ... to you!

Richard & Patty Charles

Thank you from inmate Jackie Allen:

I want to thank your church. Please let them know that the food box was a Big Blessing and I really do thank God for people like you that don't mind being a blessing to someone ... looks like your church has that same heart of gold ... please keep me in your prayers as I do the same for you all and I know that one day we will all walk the streets that are paved with gold and just praise Jesus!!

Thank you ...

To the Godly men, women and children of Bethlehem United Methodist Church,

We cannot begin to tell you what a blessing you have been to our family, and to our neighbors. From the wonderful visits, to the people who came out to clear limbs and rake leaves, to the lovely fruit basket, and most of all the prayers ... we thank you with all of our hearts! The love of God shines forth from your congregation. You will forever leave a legacy of Christ - like actions in this community - and the knowledge that God is very much alive and working through His people. Thank you, and thank you a million times again for all that you have done for us, and for the fellowship that we cherish. It is our prayer that God will abundantly bless your church and all of the people therein.

*With love and thanksgiving in Christ,
Joe & Cindy Rowland & Family*

Thank You ...

Thank you to the United Methodist Women for the lovely basket of goodies at Thanksgiving. It was so nice for you to remember me, and I truly appreciate your thoughtfulness.

Shirley Galliher

*Thank you! we met the
Match because of that
every day at power cross
i get to play the game
Sincerely Skyleal*



Bethlehem United
Methodist Church

Primary Business Address
Your Address Line 2
Your Address Line 3
Your Address Line 4

Return Service
Requested

Non-Profit Organization
US Postage Paid
Statesville, NC 28677
Permit # 51

DECEMBER SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Acolyte: Devin Poole

Ushers: Travis Last, Dink Lefever

Jr. Ushers: Aleya Last, Joshua Hager

Greeters:

- 3 - Tom & Pat Snow
- 10 - Denny & Trudy Peacock
- 17 - Jerry & Cleeta Barger
- 24 - Rhonda Kontos, Barbara Lippard
- 31 - Tony & Jayne Miller

Nursery:

- 3 - Justin & Jackie Douglass
- 10 - Trudy Peacock, Carolyn Poole
- 17 - Laura Bass, Betty Ann Kleinhans
- 24 - Nora Wyly, Barbara Lippard
- 31 - Shawn & Amanda Lancaster

Children's Church:

- 3 - Tom & Amber Williamson
- 10 - Suzie Davis

No Children's Church on Dec. 17, 24 or 31
due to special Christmas services.

Church Staff - *Heather Kilbourne, Pastor*
Kay Coggins, Church Secretary
Amanda Brookshire, Music Director

Office Hours: Tues. - Fri. 10:00 - 2:00
704-873-8284 Church Office
704-929-4323 Pastor's Cell